



Young Carers Awareness Day: Key Messages

Please use these key messages when discussing Young Carers Awareness Day with community agencies, carers, clients, reporters or any decision-makers in your community.

What is Young Carers Awareness Day?

- On January 25th, 2018 The Ontario Caregiver Coalition along with its members and partner community agencies will be announcing and celebrating Ontario's first annual Young Carer Day.
- Young Carers Awareness Day acknowledges and celebrates the importance of their continued contribution to our health care system, economy, and respectively, their communities.
- Celebrating Young Carers Awareness Day will shine a spotlight on young carers and start a province-wide discussion on how to better recognize and support young carers in their everyday life.

Who are young carers?

- There are almost 500,000 young carers in Ontario between the ages of 15 to 24 years old. As we know, young carers also include children and youth that fall under the age of 15, but who are not reported within this figure (Stamatopolous, 2015; Stats Canada, 2006) 17% of Ontario's 3.3 million family caregivers are young carers (between 15 -24), although young carers are often a forgotten group. Or to look at it a different way, 28% of 15-24 year olds report being a caregiver.
- Young carers contribute to the care of their friends and loved ones.
- A young carer is a child, youth, or young adult that provides physical, medical, emotional, or other supports to a parent, grandparent or sibling.
- Young carers provide an average of 14 hours of care per week, ¼ of carers spend 3-6 hours per day which is equivalent of a part-time job. Types of care include:

- **Domestic Care:** cooking, cleaning and sibling care
- **Emotional Support:** companionship and social support
- **Personal Care:** administering medication, bathing and dressing, assistance with feeding
- **General Care:** translation, transportation, and assistance with financial paperwork (Frank et al., 1999; Warren, 2017.)
- On a weekly basis, young carers often spend 2-3 times more on completing the above types of care than non-caring children and youth (Aldridge & Becker, 1993; Warren, 2007).
- There are two sides to the young carers coin – many are at risk of higher stress levels, loneliness, anxiety, having lower self-esteem and experiencing depressive symptoms. Young carers are also more mature and compassionate than many others their age, and often chose to go into a caring profession.

Young Carers In Ontario

- There are very few organizations in Ontario (~10) that provide services and supports for young carers, and a general lack of awareness or understanding of who young carers are, and how they support their family members.
- Family caregivers are gaining recognition in Ontario, however young carers are almost always left out of the discussion.
- We know from the UK experience that young carers benefit greatly from both peer and professional support, as well as socializing with other young carers. We need more of this in Canada.

How can the provincial government support young carers?

- Recognizing the important contribution of all young carers across Ontario by making every January 25th Ontario's Young Carers Awareness Day.
- Understand and address the needs of young carers by providing supports and resources for this growing population, especially as the province creates the first Caregiver organization.